



EdData II—Nigeria Reading and Access Research Activity

Testing an Approach to Improving Reading

Nigeria RARA is evaluating an approach to Hausa reading instruction in Bauchi and Sokoto states.

Photo: R. Drake Warrick



A Primary 2 teacher shows pupils how to form letters using their fingers in the air, one of many strategies used to teach reading with the RARA approach.

Despite significant gains in the number of children participating in formal schooling in Nigeria, education quality remains low, particularly in the north. For example, recent early grade reading assessments conducted in Bauchi and Sokoto states revealed that the majority of pupils in Primary 2 could not read a single word of a short story in Hausa. Moreover, millions of children in Nigeria still do not attend formal school.

To address these challenges, the Nigeria Reading and Access Research Activity (RARA), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is conducting research and evaluating strategies for improving early grade reading and access to education in Northern Nigeria.

RARA is assisting the Nigerian government with the development and testing of an instructional model to improve the Hausa reading skills of Primary 2 children in Bauchi and Sokoto states. Research results will inform the development of effective and affordable scale-up strategies that address reading.

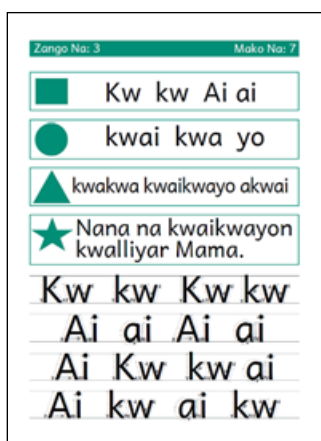
Contact information

R. Drake Warrick, Chief of Party
rwarrick@rti.org

Methods

The RARA reading approach is designed to improve early reading skills in Hausa by providing appropriate instructional and learning materials, teacher training, and ongoing, school-based coaching support to teachers.

RARA is evaluating this approach through a randomized controlled trial design. One group of 60 schools is participating in RARA activities (treatment group), while a second group of 60 schools is not (control group). Teachers' instructional practices and pupils' reading outcomes will be measured at the beginning and end of the 2014–2015 school year—both before and after RARA implementation. The results for the control and treatment groups will be compared to identify changes that may be attributable to the RARA approach.



The RARA approach focuses on teaching foundational reading skills, such as letter sounds, as well as fluency, comprehension, and writing. Pupils are provided with books (see excerpt) to allow them to practice these skills.

State Collaboration

To involve stakeholders and to build their knowledge of the research design and implementation process, RARA convened a Reading Advisory Committee and Technical Working Group composed of officials and professionals from the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), the Ministry of Education, colleges of education, school-based management committees, Local Government Education Authorities, traditional leaders, and civil society organizations.

These groups provide guidance, raise awareness and support, and share findings. The Technical Working Group further played a key role in the development and implementation of the approach and materials.

Use of Results

RARA's research results will deepen understanding of how to improve reading instruction and the Hausa reading skills of children in the early grades. Results will also inform decisions by government, donor partners, civil society, and the private sector regarding the feasibility and effectiveness of activities that can be taken to scale in Northern Nigeria to improve early grade reading in Hausa.

COMPONENTS OF THE RARA READING APPROACH

Teaching and Learning Materials

Appropriate and engaging instructional and learning materials—developed by reading specialists, Hausa language experts, teacher trainers, and government education officials—are provided to teachers and pupils. They include a Teacher's Guide, Pupil Book, and Story Read Alouds.



Professional Development

A cadre of teacher trainers is equipped to train Hausa teachers, head teachers, and school support officers (SSOs) on reading skills and materials' use. SSOs are trained to serve as "reading coaches" to teachers. Additional training is provided for all teachers and SSOs midway through the year to deepen knowledge and address challenges.

Support and Monitoring

Teachers, head teachers, and SSOs engage in peer learning through cluster-based meetings. SSOs and head teachers observe lessons and give feedback to teachers, while RARA staff provide support to reading coaches. Ongoing monitoring data collected by reading coaches and RARA staff inform training.



Parent and Community Engagement

Outreach to school-based management committees, parents/guardians, and traditional and religious leaders provides them with information on how they can support children's literacy.

